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UA3/8/9/3 Western Edition

WKU President's Office

Todd Gibbs

Thomas Meredith

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Western Kentucky University

UA3/8 Thomas Meredith

Series 9 Interviews / Oral History

Item 3 Western Edition

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Biographical/Historical Note:

The president's office was created in 1906. The search for a new president began with Kern Alexander's resignation announcement on April 11, 1988. The Board of Regents elected Thomas Meredith as president August 5 and installed September 21, 1988. Under Meredith's leadership, the campus expanded with the purchase of the Bowling Green Center, creation the Institute of Economic Development and the implementation of the first strategic plan Western XXI. He also hired WKU's first female vice president, Barbara Burch. Meredith had served the university for a little over eight years when he announced his resignation February 5, 1997.

Thomas Carter Meredith was born in Owensboro December 7, 1941. He obtained his BS from Kentucky Wesleyan in 1963, his MS from WKU in 1966 and his PhD from the University of Mississippi in 1971. His early career was spent teaching high school in Owensboro, Kentucky and LaHarpe, Illinois. From there he moved into administrative positions in Jeffersonville, Indiana and the board of trustees of the State Institutions of Higher Learning in Mississippi. Meredith was vice chancellor for executive affairs at the University of Mississippi when he came to WKU in 1988.

Description: Western Edition program with Todd Gibbs and Thomas Meredith discussing budget cuts and new buildings on campus.

Dates: 1992

Formats: 1 audiotape, 1 wav file, 1 mp3 file

Subject Analytics:

Audio recording

Budget.

Meredith Hall (WKU)

Meredith, Thomas Carter, 1941-

Preston Health & Activities Center (WKU)

Radio broadcasting

Tate Page Hall (WKU)

Western Kentucky University

Zacharias Hall (WKU)

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Radio Broadcast Transcript

UA3.8.9.3 ~ Records

04/22/2014

Media ID	Side	Start time	Subject
Tape 1	1	00:03:43	<i>Western Edition Story with Todd Gibbs reports Dr. Thomas Meredith beginning in 3, 2, 1.</i>
Tape 1	1	00:00:17	<i>TG: New students, new buildings and new challenges are what face many colleges and university campuses each year. This fall when Western Kentucky University students returned to the Hill there were plenty of new visual areas of change. University president Thomas C. Meredith says this academic year at Western Kentucky University has meant many positive changes.</i>
Tape 1	1	00:00:40	<i>TM: We've been very fortunate. We've built two new residence halls that are open this fall. Our students think they're the greatest thing that's come along in a long time. And they are right. They are. Computer accessibility, computer labs in each one and they're just wonderful. A new health and activities building named after Raymond B. Preston from Henderson. He and his wife Hattie were very generous to us and helped us make this building a reality. Just a wonderful addition to our facility. Tate Page Hall many people remember that great old round building houses the College of Education it's going through a renovation. Potter Hall on top of the campus the oldest residence hall that we have is going under a major renovation but will not come back as a residence hall. It'll be a student services building housing everything on campus.</i>
Tape 1	1	00:01:30	<i>TG: The new and renovated facilities fit into Western's master plan. A plan which Meredith worked to update when he came to Western in 1988. The growth in the number of buildings on campus has been mirrored by the growth in enrollment in the last six years. It's a trend which has leveled off this semester. And it's a trend which Meredith says has pushed Western's financial limits to the edge.</i>
Tape 1	1	00:01:56	<i>TM: Western Kentucky University just about five or six years ago, approximately 54% of our budget came from the state. It's now 46%. That's a major drop. Higher education as a portion of the state's total budget was 20% back in the seventies. It's now 14.9% and will go to 14.5% next year. So higher education as a priority has continued to fall in this state and obviously as a president I'm very worried about that.</i>
Tape 1	1	00:02:30	<i>TG: Western isn't alone in facing the budget cutting axe. The trend nationally appears to be to look at trimming higher education allocations when facing state budget shortfalls. Meredith likes to point out the pitfalls in looking to higher education to solve budget shortfalls and the benefits of supporting all levels of education.</i>
Tape 1	1	00:02:53	<i>TM: Although it is much, much more funding for higher education could be considered as simply an economic decision. To set our goals, to have the finest K-12 system is too shortsighted. If this state is to become as competitive as we all would like us to be then we must fully develop and utilize our higher education system. Education in this state must be seen as a continuum from pre-kindergarten through university.</i>
Tape 1	1	00:03:24	<i>TG: The benefits higher education produces are easily seen when visiting Western today. And Meredith hopes in coming years will be years of continuing progress for higher education in Kentucky.</i> <i>For the Western Edition I'm Todd Gibbs.</i>